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# Food & Nutrition

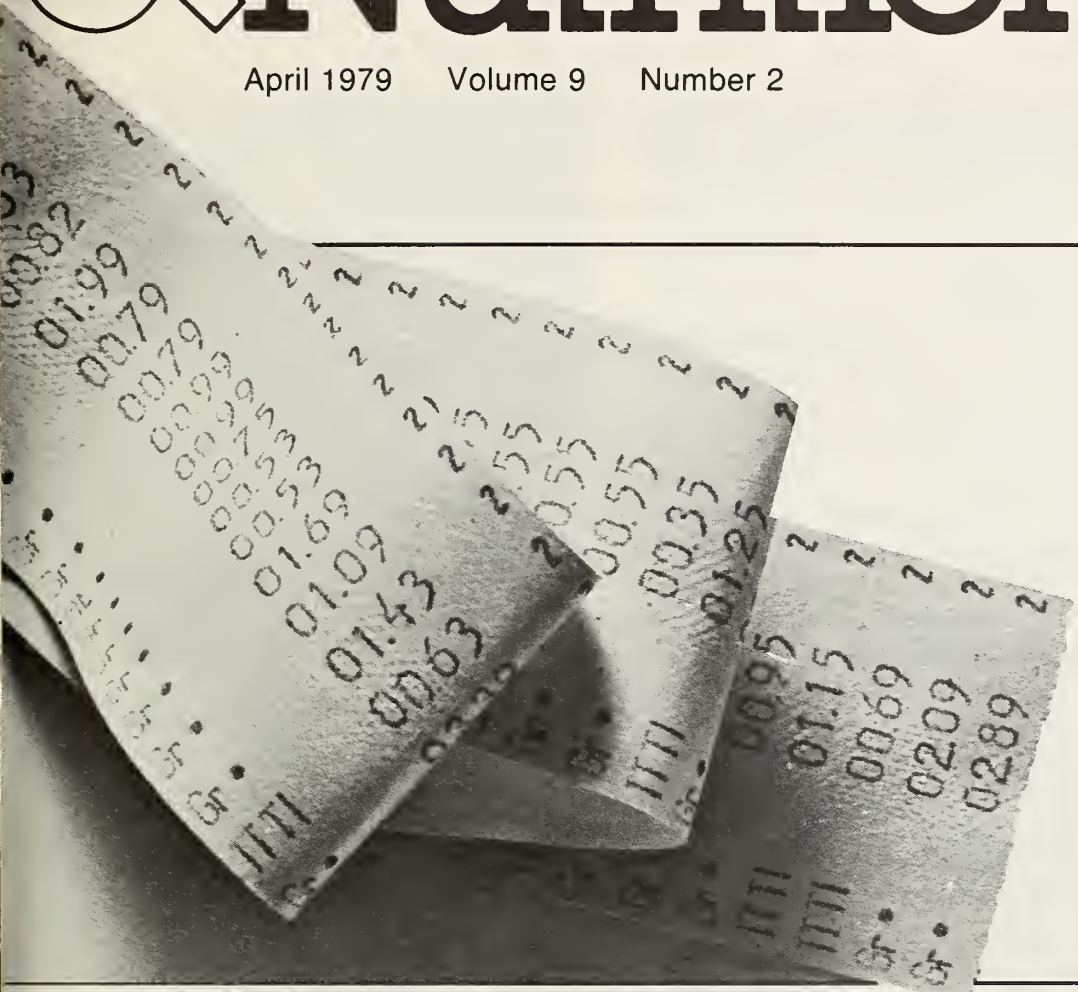
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## Food Stamps

This issue includes three food stamp articles. One reports on recently completed and upcoming studies. The others discuss food stamp changes. **Page 2**

## Learning Can Be Lively and Fun

The people featured in these two articles have some advice on teaching kids about food. Make learning active, lively and fun, they say, and you'll see results. **Page 6**

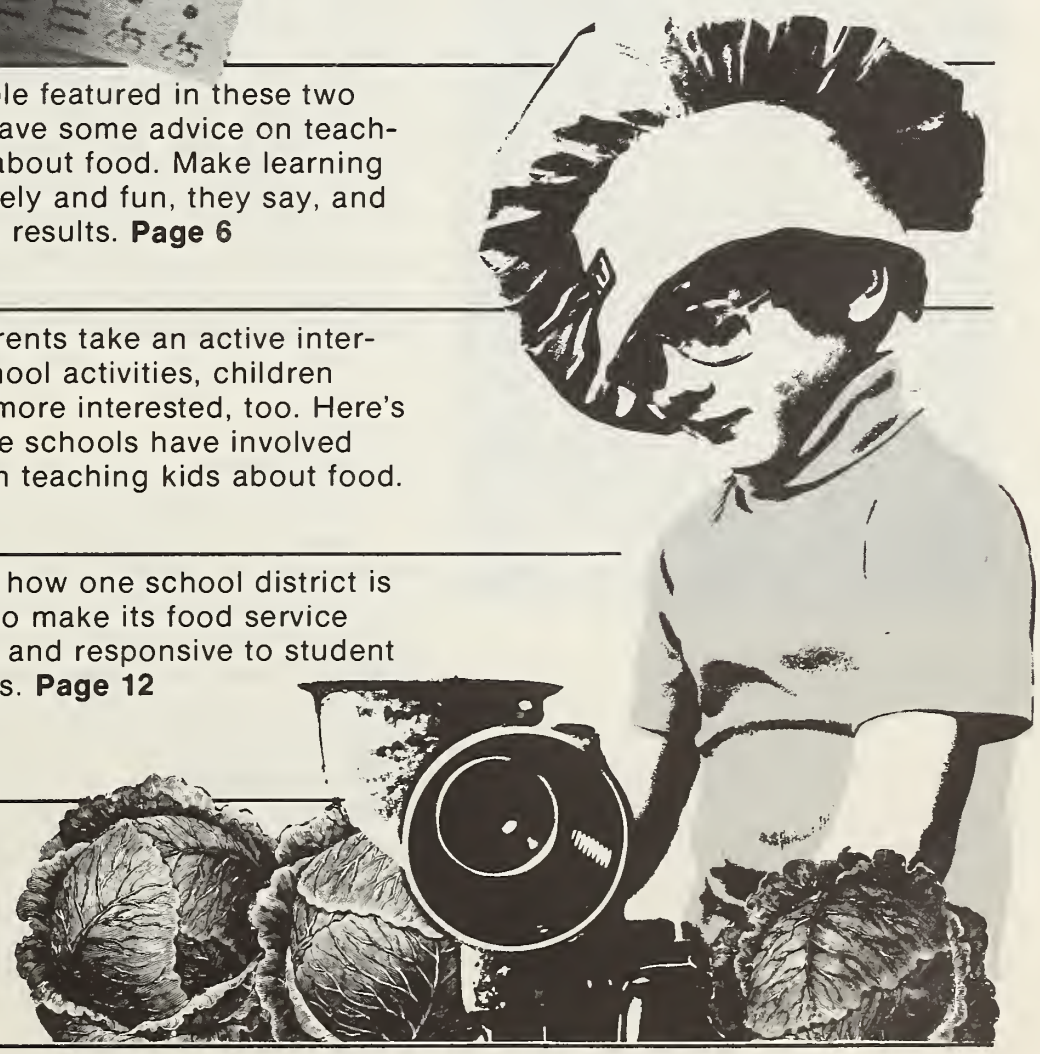
## Parents Get Involved

When parents take an active interest in school activities, children become more interested, too. Here's how some schools have involved parents in teaching kids about food. **Page 10**

## Attracting School Lunch Customers

A look at how one school district is working to make its food service attractive and responsive to student customers. **Page 12**

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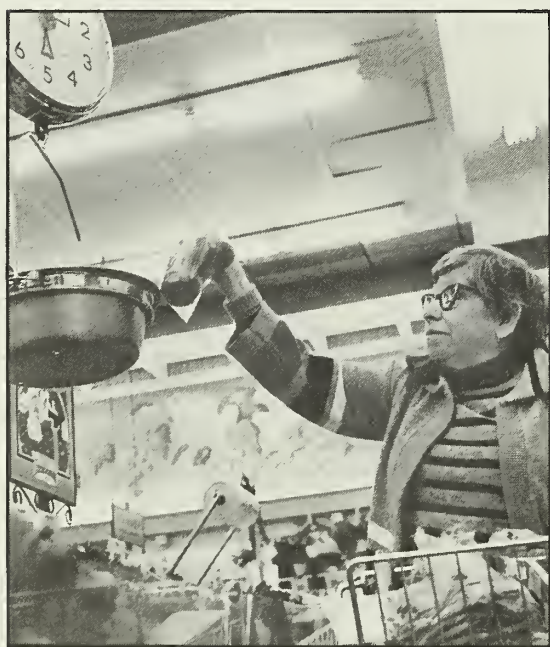
# Food Stamps

## Two studies dispel myths about food stamp users

**True or false:** A lot of people on food stamps hold up lines in grocery stores buying high-priced steaks and snack foods, then drive away in expensive cars to homes in the suburbs.

**False.** That was the conclusion of two studies recently published by the Department of Agriculture.

About two-thirds of the families using food stamps not only do not own an expensive car—they don't even own a car. This fact surfaced in



a study comparing the assets of people using food stamps with other low-income people and families with higher incomes.

### Compared to other families

In addition to dispelling the myth of the expensive cars, the study revealed that only 29 percent of food stamp families own their own homes. In comparison, more than 67 percent of other families own the homes in which they live. In addition, the homes food stamp families do own are worth only half as much as the homes of other families.

What kind of savings do food stamp families have? Sixty percent have absolutely no savings at all, the study revealed. The rest have less than \$1,500. By contrast, only 9 percent of other families have no savings. And two-thirds of the 91 percent who have savings have more than \$1,500 in the bank.

Data for the assets study was drawn from several sources—the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Education, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey, and the Food Stamp Household Characteristics Study conducted by the Food and Nutrition Service.

### Looking at buying habits

What about the food stamp steaks? According to Donald West of Washington State University, people who use food stamps primarily buy cheaper cuts of meat than cash customers. They also spend significantly higher percentages of their food budgets for pork and poultry than other customers.

In a study recently conducted for the Food and Nutrition Service, West found that people who use food stamps spend about half as much as other customers on snacks, like potato chips, pretzels and nuts. They

spend less on ice cream, yogurt and bakery products and more on whole milk, eggs, cereal and flour.

West also discovered that food stamp users spend considerably less money at restaurants than Americans in general and less than other low-income households who are eligible for food stamps, but who do not get them.

"I found that food stamp users look for bargains and try to spend their limited incomes in reasonable ways," West concludes.

West based his study on the 1973-74 Consumer Expenditure Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A summary of West's study has been printed in the June issue of the *National Food Review*, a publication of the Agriculture Department's Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service.

Reprints of the *National Food Review* article are available from the Food and Nutrition Service's Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation. Also available are copies of the study of assets of low-income families.

### More studies are planned

Over the coming year, the Food and Nutrition Service will be conducting and contracting a variety of studies to assess the impact of food stamp changes required by the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Some of these changes are already in effect, and others will be taking effect during the coming months.

- In July, as required by law, the Food and Nutrition Service will report to Congress on one of the most significant food stamp changes—the elimination of the requirement that people purchase part of their food stamp allotments.

Until now, most people have had to use some of their own money to get





**“With food stamps, I can buy more and I can buy varied foods,” says Beverly Alexander, a retired nurse living in Richmond, Virginia.**

**“Food stamps are a big help when you’re living on a fixed income and food is so expensive. I really think more older people should use them.”**

**Many older people, Alexander feels, don’t take advantage of food stamps because they feel they’re “charity.” Alexander sees it differently. “We pay taxes all our lives,” she says, “and I don’t think of food stamps as welfare. I think they’re just something returned for the taxes we’ve paid out.”**

stamps. Under the old rules, for instance, a qualifying family might have had to pay \$50 for \$150 worth of food stamps, depending on monthly income and other considerations. Under the new rules, the same family pays nothing and simply receives \$100 in stamps.

In the report to Congress, the Food and Nutrition Service will examine the cost and impact of doing away with the purchase requirement. A major consideration will be how this change has affected the number of people using food stamps.

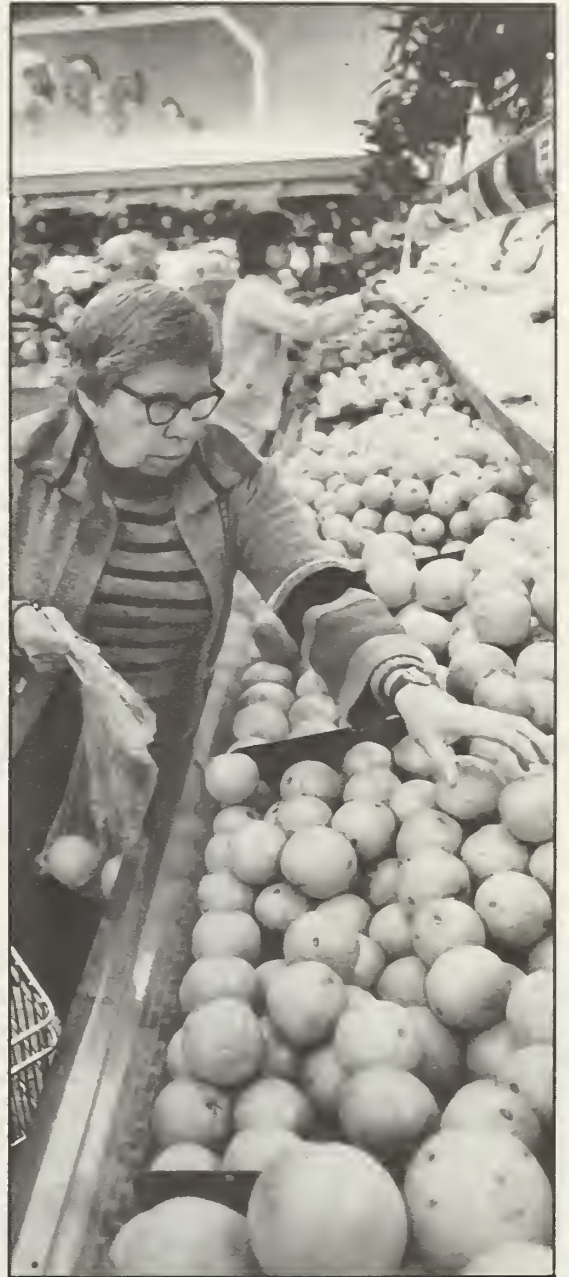
- Another study will evaluate the concept of requiring people to work in exchange for their food stamps. The new law calls for pilot tests of the “workfare” concept to be carried out in one urban and one rural area in each of the seven administrative regions of the Department’s Food and Nutrition Service. The Food and Nutrition Service will be sending an evaluation of these pilot tests to Congress by the fall of 1980.

- In a 2-year pilot test also required by law, the Food and Nutrition Service will be studying the effectiveness of giving cash payments instead of food stamps—to eligible households in which all members are either 65 years or older, or entitled to Supplemental Security Income benefits under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

- The Department will also be working on a study examining the feasibility of recovering a portion of food stamp benefits from households whose total annual income is more than twice the poverty line. This report is due September 1980.

The new food stamp law requires an annual evaluation of the Food Stamp Program. The first annual report will go to Congress soon. □

*By Dianne D. Jenkins*





# Food Stamps

## Carol Tucker Foreman talks about recent changes

In January, major food stamp changes began taking effect across the country. The most significant change is that people using stamps no longer have to convert some of their own cash into food stamps.

Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman spoke about the Food Stamp Program's past and the significance of current changes during a session last fall with students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Here are excerpts from that talk:

*"I think the Food Stamp Program is a terribly important income maintenance program for needy Americans. It serves a large population very well. . . .*

*"It serves those people who are in short-term need especially well. People who are unemployed for 3 or 4 months and would otherwise be in dire financial straits can easily come into the Food Stamp Program, participate for a short period of time, and then go back out.*

*"And we find, in fact, that's what they do. People come into the Food Stamp Program for an average of 4 months. There are some long-term recipients, but most are fairly short-term.*

*"Obviously, any program that grows rapidly in a short period of time is going to be plagued with growing pains. The Food Stamp Program went from virtually a pilot project to a program with 19 million participants in about 4 years. . . . [Participation reached a record high of 19 million people in May 1975. During the last year, participation has averaged 16 million.]*

*"Shortly after coming in to office, the Carter Administration proposed to Congress major changes in the Food Stamp Program—changes which we think will make it more available to people most in need.*

*"We eliminated the purchase requirement. That has been identified as the single largest reason why people don't participate in the Food Stamp Program.*

*"There are areas of the country and particular age groups in which participation levels are outrageously low. Fewer than 40 percent of elderly people eligible for food stamps participate in the program. And, in various areas of the South participation rates are very low.*

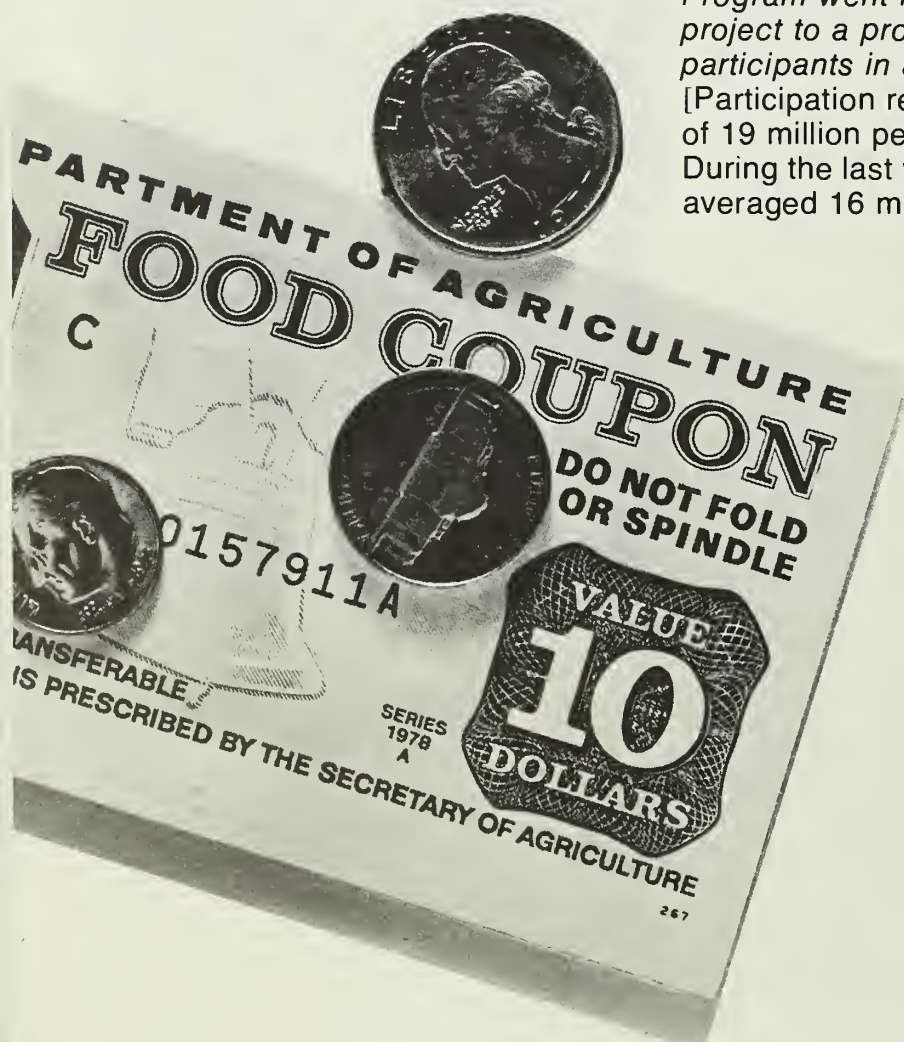
*"... the first thing we wanted to do was eliminate the purchase requirement and bring in the very lowest income groups who were too poor to participate in the past.*

*"To compensate, we reduced the highest level of income that you can have and still be eligible for the program. . . .*

*"The elimination of the purchase requirement also should have the beneficial effect of simplifying the administration of the program substantially. Among other things, there won't be 3 billion dollars worth of cash changing hands out there and tending to get lost before it ever gets back to the Federal Government.*

*"We have set a standard deduction (instead of itemized deductions) which also simplifies program administration. "There have been many administrative procedures introduced for clamping down hard on those people who would abuse the program and fraudulently use its benefits, particularly students. . . .*

*"We think these changes have the capacity to restore credibility to a program that is of substantial importance."*





# Food Stamps

**Several major changes are now in effect**

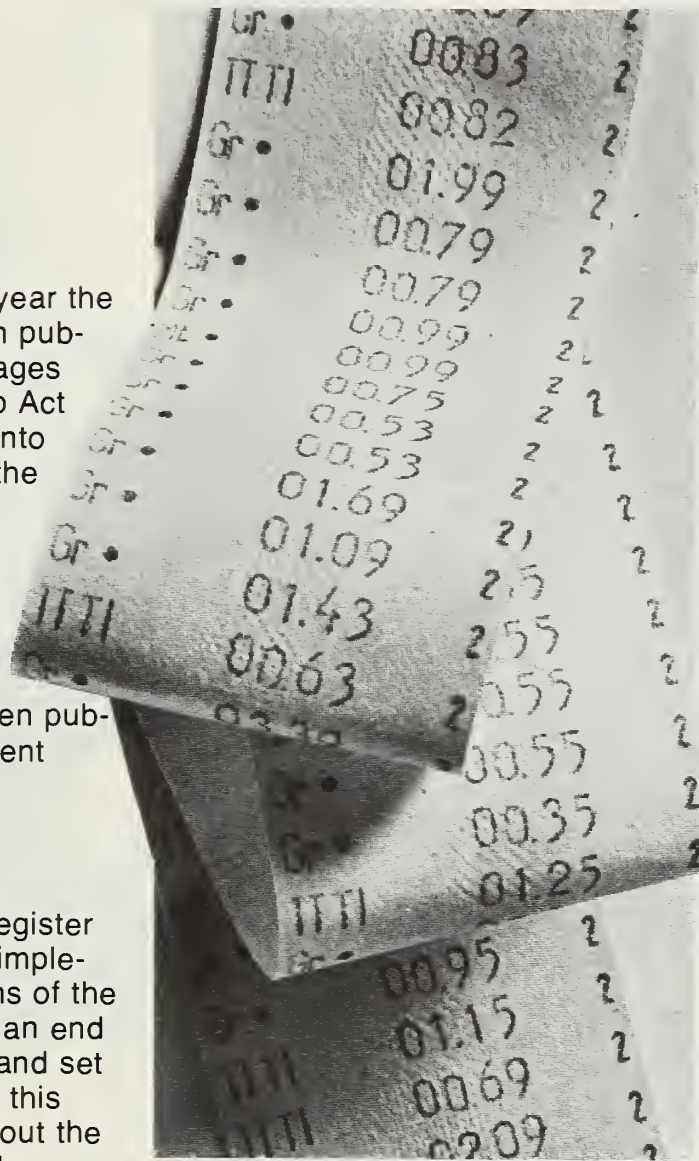
Starting in September last year the Agriculture Department began publishing major regulatory packages implementing the Food Stamp Act of 1977. The regulations put into effect changes mandated by the law.

As the regulations are prepared, they are published in the Federal Register. If they are published in proposed form, public comment is invited. Final regulations are then published after a specified comment period.

## Several key changes made

Published in the Federal Register October 13 were regulations implementing several key provisions of the new law. The regulations put an end to the purchase requirement and set January 1 as the deadline for this change to take effect throughout the country. They also prescribed new, lower income limits and standardized deductions and set March 1 as the deadline for all States to begin using them. The regulations also:

- Prohibited the participation of families owning luxury cars.
- Eliminated some students and required most students remaining eligible to register for work or leave the program.
- Set up new procedures barring persons found to have committed fraud from receiving food stamps for periods of 3 to 24 months.
- Called for more flexible certification procedures, such as home visits



or telephone interviews, for elderly and handicapped persons.

States had until March 1 to introduce these changes.

## New rules for retailers

New rules for retailers accepting food stamps went into effect January 1. The rules, published in the Federal Register September 22, limit participation to those stores whose food sales consist primarily of staple foods. Over 50 percent of a participating retailer's or wholesaler's food sales must be in staple foods intended for home preparation, such as fresh meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits and dairy products.

The regulations prohibit food stores from accepting food stamps for sales of hot foods ready for immediate consumption. They also require stores to give cash instead of credit slips as change for amounts less than \$1 in food stamp transactions.

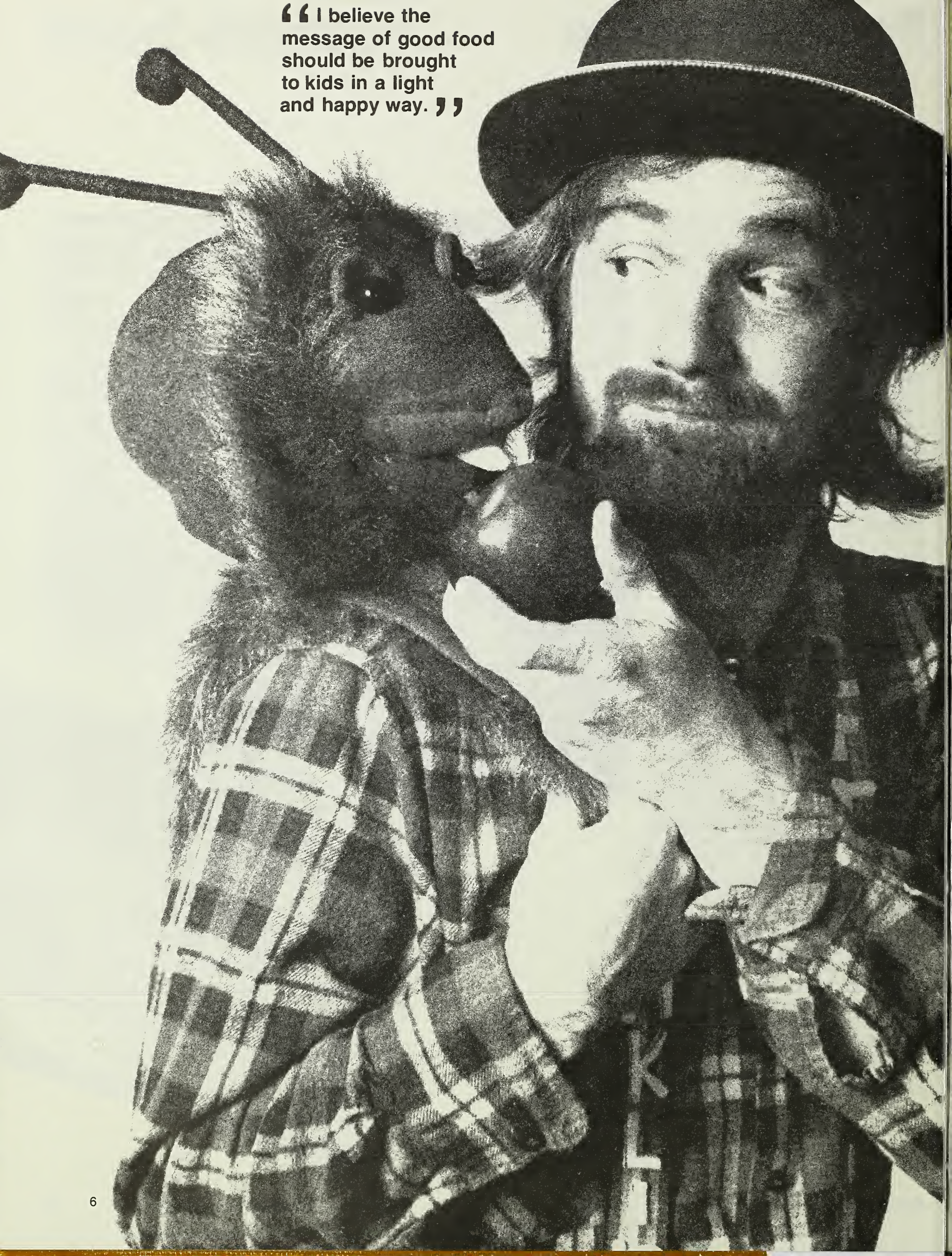
**Other changes  
will be made**

The Agriculture Department will propose additional regulations based on the 1977 Food Stamp Act in coming months. Among them will be provisions on States' plans of operation, accessibility of services, and special procedures for use in disasters. □

by Dianne D. Jenkins



“ I believe the  
message of good food  
should be brought  
to kids in a light  
and happy way. ”





# Teaching Kids About Food: Learning Can Be Lively and Fun

*Learning about food can be fun for kids. In fact, according to the people featured in the following two articles, learning about food should be fun. The first tells how an unusual nutrition educator is helping young children develop a sense of responsibility about making wise food choices. The second is about summer food activities in Louisiana.*

## **Franklin entertains, teaches, delights**

Franklin the Good Food Friend is a performing artist who has the special ability to turn kids on to healthy eating habits through a multitude of characterizations.

Franklin deftly moves from Roland the Tooth Fairy, who musically warns his young admirers, "You've got to watch those sweets," to Roger the Singing Carrot, who intones a sorrowful chant because he often winds up in the garbage can at lunchtime. Whatever Franklin does, the objective—nutrition consciousness—is the thread that holds his multifaceted act together.

Franklin and his pals, six hand puppets and a dozen characters, are the innovation of Maine's Bill Wood, who charms children—and adults—throughout the State. Since December 1977, Wood has completed 300 "nutrition shows," performing for an average of 750 kids every 2 weeks.

His target audience includes kids in kindergarten through grade three at 11 schools in central Maine, which he visits on a regular basis. He travels a circuit of no less than 22 classrooms and 600 miles.

Wood puts on extra shows for kids in day care and Head Start centers, and 4-H Clubs. In addition, he performs for Granges, PTA's, and other adult groups for the benefit of those parents who want to see the one-man nutrition show, and get a line on his comradery with their children.

## **Approach is light, happy**

"I try to be low key," says Wood, a 1974 graduate in theater arts from the University of Maine.

"I believe the message of good food should be brought to kids in a light and happy way.

"If Franklin sermonized, or came on as a heavy-handed character meddling with family behavior, he could neither be successful with the kids nor obtain adult support.

"And," he adds, "if Franklin were that way, he would deserve his fate."

Franklin the Good Food Friend got his start a few years back, when Wood applied for a nutrition education position sponsored jointly by the Franklin County Community Action Agency and the Public Service Division of the University of Maine at Farmington.

Twenty-three people applied for the unique position in live arts performance, which required an audition before a panel of consultants. It was during the audition that Wood presented his idea for reaching kids through the warm and witty Franklin.

"We could see Bill would do an excellent job translating nutrition education material into an art form that is easily understood by young children," says Dot Sweatt, family day care coordinator for the Franklin County community action group.

Sweatt served on the audition panel and later became Wood's supervisor, paving the way for Franklin's premier performance through visits with school superintendents, principals, and teachers in Franklin County. Wood accompanied her on these early visits to dispel any doubts and clarify details surrounding Franklin's mission.

## **Still works with panel**

Wood continues to work closely with Sweatt and other consultants, who generate ideas for new material. He meets regularly with a technical panel which includes: an education

instructor; two assistant professors—one in dietetics and one in theatre arts; a health education research designer; and a media specialist.

Wood develops those ideas which are most useful to Franklin, and originates scripts and songs to carry the good food message. The panel reviews material for accuracy and effectiveness. Each show focuses on a theme and is planned to:

- increase children's awareness of the need to eat a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables, milk, and foods high in iron;
- decrease food waste in school cafeterias;
- improve snacking habits by decreasing concentrated sweets; and
- raise a critical awareness of what constitutes the most positive contribution to good nutrition and health.

Field nutritionist Deborah Wells is traveling with Wood this year to offer assistance to teachers who wish to incorporate nutrition education into their lesson plans. Wells pulls appropriate teaching materials together from a list of items that would most likely be needed. The list is developed by the technical panel at the weekly meetings.

Tim Hupp, media specialist from the University of Maine's audiovisual center, also works directly with the Good Food Friend. He records shows on videotape to provide feedback to Wood and to help panel members weigh, at least informally, the impact of the experimental approach.

## **Children like action**

Wood's teaching philosophy revolves around the concept that children favor fast-paced action. He understands television's impact on kids, so he follows a similar format. A puppet show is followed in rapid succession by characterizations, a magic show, skits, and songs. Each element within his 30-minute performance lasts about 2 to 3 minutes.

In one segment, Franklin's Aunt Edna encourages kids to eat nourish-



ing snacks, making it clear that the choice—and responsibility—is theirs. *"Be good to your body,"* she says, *"give it a treat. Let the snack be tasty, but something good for you to eat."*

Another segment attacks plate waste through the use of antagonist Wasteful Wild Willy, who likes to act "silly," especially at lunch.

*"... if I think I won't like it,"* says Willy, *"why I don't even try it, I simply throw the food away."*

*"Oh, I always make a mess, because I'm in a hurry to get out for recess, I want to get out and play."*

Instead of eating a nourishing lunch, Wasteful Willy fills up on candy and other "sugar-coated dandies." But the truth comes out when he mourns:

*"Hey my stomach feels like a knot! ... you know, I don't feel good a lot. Especially when I only eat a little good food, but lots and lots and LOTS of sweets. It's not much fun being a Wasteful Wild Willy!"*

Franklin is accessible. In his Chaplinesque style he encourages a free flow of discussion and evokes questions and answers, which not only educate but also entertain.

The Franklin experiment was made possible by a Community Food and Nutrition Project grant from the Community Services Administration (CSA). With help from CSA, the experiment will be extended this year to reach the fourth grade as well as the earlier grades.

The extension of Franklin into the lives of fourth graders will bring a change to Bill Wood, according to Dot Sweatt.

"The objective is to have fourth graders develop their own nutrition plays, shows, and songs so that they can take nutrition to greater depths," she says. "Bill will help the children develop their own shows."

#### **How effective is Franklin?**

Both intuitive evidence and more formal research show that Franklin is

making inroads on the nutritional knowledge and eating habits of the children he entertains.

He continues to make his presence felt through the ongoing series of live performances, geared mainly for the very young in central Maine. But his potential impact is increasing throughout New England via several different routes, including State and regional nutrition conferences, advisory groups, and media.

He was an "overnight sensation," at the New England Day Care Conference in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the Fourth Maine Biomedical Symposium last year.

Franklin has been videotaped by a Boston television station, WCVB-TV, Channel 5, and some of his material will appear as 30-second "Good Food" public service announcements. The announcements will be shown during children's viewing hours. In addition, Franklin is being taped for the Maine Child Nutrition Project, concentrating on school breakfast.

A nontechnical policy advisory committee has now been formed to assure community involvement in planning future performances. It includes teachers, school food service workers and parents from the communities Franklin visits.

Bill Wood, as Franklin the Good Food Friend, is a happy messenger of sound eating habits. And few who have seen and listened to him would disagree with him when he says:

"Learning about good food doesn't have to be something boring or awful. It can be fun." □

*by Dennis Shimkoski*

## **Summer food activities reach kids and parents**

Last summer hundreds of Louisiana children dressed up like apples, grapefruits and other foods to entertain their parents and friends with dances, skits and songs like "Big Fat Prunes" and "We Don't Eat What We Used To Eat."

It wasn't just the typical end-of-summer zaniness. The youngsters were making a very important point. They had done more than just have a good time this summer. They had learned some important things about nutrition, most of them for the very first time.

The children were participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Program for Children, which provides Federal cash and food support for meals served by qualified sponsoring organizations.

Last year, thanks largely to State nutritionist Julianne Territo, the sponsors of about 100 Louisiana sites structured their activities around a food and nutrition theme. In addition to serving meals, sponsors organized nutrition classes, got youngsters involved in the food service, and planned playtime activities which taught the kids the importance of eating the right foods.

#### **For children and parents**

The target audience for the nutrition activities were children from low-income families, many of whom came from homes with little variety in their diets. Activity leaders reported that at tasting parties, where the youngsters tried raw foods, many children didn't recognize grapefruits, pears, cucumbers and other fresh fruits and vegetables.

A secondary audience for the food



information was parents. Kids carried letters home explaining what they had eaten each day and why. The letters were colored by the children, taken home, and returned after the parents had read and signed them.

The letters packaged food information in a way that was interesting to both parents and students, explained Julianne Territo, who encouraged sponsors to offer the nutrition activities at their sites. "The letters were a fun way for kids and their folks to learn about nutrition together. In fact, several parents called to express appreciation for what their children had learned about eating smart."

The wrap-up presentation at summer's end was another example of effectively packaging nutrition information. The kids jumped, sang, danced and acted out the food lessons they had learned.

"We were pleased with how effective the presentation was," Territo said. "Parents won't come and talk to us about nutrition, but they're usually eager to watch and listen to their kids. The letters are successful for the same reason: they're something their kids have done."

#### **Site sponsors got materials**

For the past 3 years, Julianne Territo has been distributing a packet of materials put together by Food and Nutrition Service regional nutrition coordinator Emma Nance. The packet includes background information for instructors, lesson plans, activities tailored to specific age groups, and take-home materials for parents.

Many activities call for materials to be made by the instructors and children themselves. This makes construction part of the education process and helps minimize costs.

It's important to give site sponsors self-explanatory materials, said Territo. "At most sites we are working with volunteers with varied backgrounds. Many are CETA workers for



**“ Kids want to have fun during the summer. And, that is what the nutrition activities were all about. ”**

example, or college students, or parents of participating children.

"Most don't need to be sold on the importance of nutrition," she said, "but they do need materials." Small staffs and abbreviated budgets are common to summer recreation sites.

In addition to distributing materials, Territo and her staff of nutrition consultants also work directly with site sponsors. They give workshops on nutrition education and how it can be worked into summer activities.

#### **The idea is catching on**

Last year's effort showed the idea is catching on—with sponsors and kids alike. And there were some noticeable results.

"At the end of the summer we had children making their own salads, using fruits and vegetables they didn't even recognize a few months earlier," said Emma Nance, who was pleased to see the nutrition materials put to good use. As regional director of the Food and Nutrition Service's nutrition and technical services staff, Nance was extremely interested in the children's response.

The lunchroom staffs were interested, too. Several said that as the summer progressed, children were eating more of their lunches, and throwing away less.

If the nutrition activities worked, said Julianne Territo, it was because they got support from so many people: sponsors who let the children get involved in preparing their own food; instructors who worked nutrition into their schedules; cafeteria staffs who introduced new foods to less than enthusiastic young patrons; and untrained volunteers who boned up on nutrition so they could pass the information on to kids.

Equally important, she said, the activities worked because they were fun for kids. "Kids want to have fun during the summer, and that's what the nutrition activities were all about."

*by Tino Serrano*



# Teaching Kids About Food: Parents Get Involved

Parents who trouble to interest themselves in nutrition education activities can greatly influence the success of these activities. Yet many parents, for one reason or another, don't get involved.

Fran White, a nutrition education specialist in Louisiana, cites many reasons for this.

"With their ever-busy schedules, it's difficult to get parents to meetings or seminars," she says. "And many think they know all about nutrition. The subject hits a sensitive nerve."

Involving parents can be especially difficult in instances in which both mothers and fathers work.

The problem, however, may sometimes be deeper than parental time constraints. Madeline Wills, who chairs the National PTA's health and welfare commission, says one factor is that parents don't always feel welcome in schools.

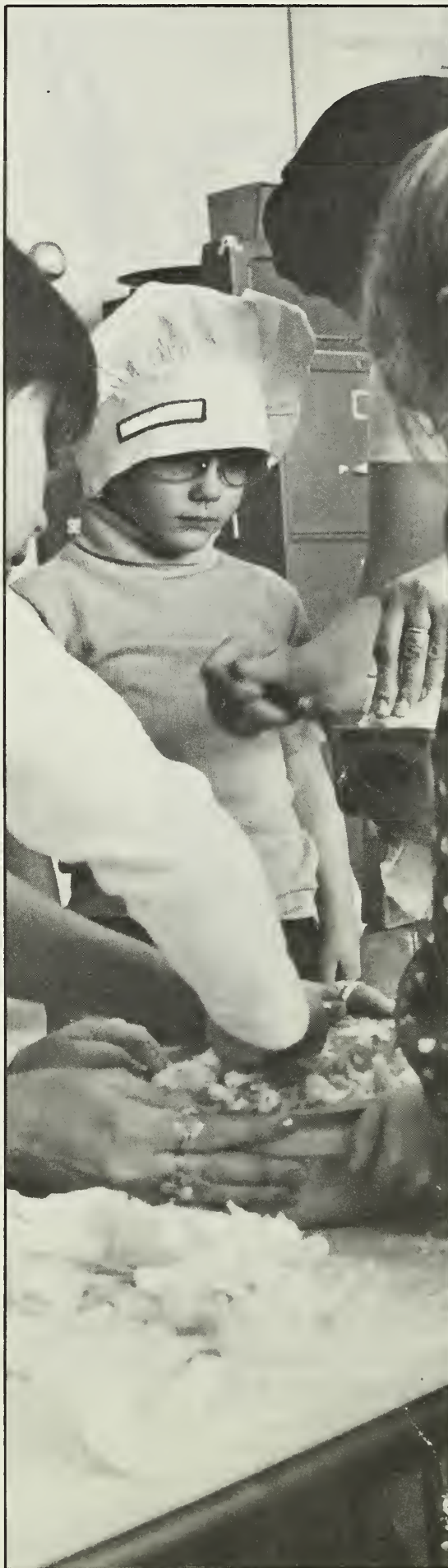
Whatever the reason, many State nutrition education leaders express the same frustration. Louisiana's Fran White summed it up this way: "The PTA's here are fairly active, but some parents just don't have time. I couldn't hit on any motivating force."

## A system that works

Anita Ellis, West Virginia's director of nutrition education and training, found a motivating force while managing a grant from the Food and Nutrition Service. The study evaluated the effectiveness of nutrition education on children in kindergarten through grade 6. Parents and teachers played vital roles.

"Parent involvement was an exciting result of our study," she said. "In 96 percent of the schools taking part, principals reported that parents responded favorably."

"Several PTA's made money available to teachers for tasting experiments, and, in some schools, parents helped prepare foods in the classrooms. Parents also helped with the plate waste studies we did in the school cafeterias," she said.



To motivate parents, Anita Ellis says, you must make them see that their role is important. "Parents must feel needed in order to participate," she explains. "They just won't find the time otherwise."

Ellis says she has found a system that works for parent involvement. The key, she says is the word "project." If the school and community accept a project, understand it, and are really concerned about its success, it will succeed.

"For instance," she says, "all the teachers can plan a project emphasizing nutrition—even for a short period, 4 or 5 weeks. If they have a play or other activity that includes the children, parents will turn out to support them."

"Once you have an audience, give parents specific assignments—do a tasting party, whatever. Parents will get involved. But you have to be determined and dedicated, and keep their motivation up."

## A look at one school

At Gihon Elementary School in Parkersburg, West Virginia, parent involvement was especially successful. The school lies in a low-income area, where there are many one-parent homes and welfare families. In most two-parent homes, both parents work. According to Gihon school principal Winona Hall, about 400 of the 500 students enrolled eat lunch at school. About half receive their meals free or at a reduced price.

"Winona Hall's school is very eager to have parents involved in all school activities, and they were very enthusiastic about our study," says Anita Ellis. "We told teachers and principals of all 40 participating schools to get parents involved. Most, like Gihon, went through the PTAs."

All participating schools did plate waste studies before and after the



training and nutrition education curriculum.

Parents at Gihon School had learned of the effort through meetings and tasting parties held by other parents. Since the school food service staff was swamped with their own work, parents stepped in to help with plate waste studies, as they did statewide.

"When I helped out, I really started to appreciate the cooks' responsibilities, and what goes into making school lunches," says parent Ann Thorne. "Before then, I didn't think very much about it."

### **Variety of activities**

According to Anita Ellis, parents from around the State all had the same response, largely due to the variety of activities in which they participated.

At two schools, students presented plays about nutrition for their parents. Some schools had tasting parties on foods from various cultures, including early Appalachia and Viet Nam, and parents helped with classroom preparations. PTA groups showed their support by giving money to various classrooms for tasting parties, since funds were short.

The results of these efforts are impressive. Most importantly, students in West Virginia showed marked improvement in their knowledge of nutrition.

"The kids got involved with the kitchen staff and parents. We feel their general attitudes toward school lunch and nutrition improved greatly," boasted Gihon principal Winona Hall. "I know attitudes of parents and teachers have changed, too."

One parent, jokingly, said she was furious at her child's teacher because her second grade son came home wanting broccoli for dinner. The son had refused to taste broccoli at home.

Ann Thorne reported that her three sons came home from school wanting to cook. She was delighted.

### **Parents keep their interest**

Parents and educators sustained their interest in nutrition activities even after the study was concluded. At Gihon school, about 100 parents ate a special school lunch with their kids last October during National School Lunch Week. Also last fall, PTA-sponsored nutrition activities included a tasting party.

The study spurred Winona Hall's interest in nutrition to the extent that she now represents all West Virginia elementary school principals on the State nutrition advisory council. And one of the Gihon school teachers now

serves in the State nutrition standards committee. His interest was also generated by the study.

Anita Ellis finds the continued interest rewarding and promising. "It is vital to the educational process that parents support their kids," she says. "We must have a cooperative effort between parents and teachers. When we have a community problem or project, we must attack it together, for our children's sake."

Winona Hall agrees. "I feel it's absolutely necessary," she emphasizes, to have parents involved in school—in nutrition as well as in other areas. Kids' eating habits will change only if what they learn is carried back to the home and reinforced."

by Linda Feldman



West Virginia youngsters taste the coleslaw they prepared in their classroom.



# Attracting School Lunch Customers



*For managers of school food services, as for managers of restaurants, attracting customers and keeping their business is an ongoing challenge. The following article tells how one school district is working to make its food service attractive and responsive to young customers. The article is reprinted from the Orangeburg, South Carolina, Times-Democrat, Nov. 12, 1978.*

**The Illustration above**  
(from the Burpee Seed Catalog, 1888) features some of the fresh vegetables students enjoy at the salad bar.

What's your favorite breakfast? Juice and cereal? Grits and eggs? And what about lunch—a chef's salad? Sandwich and french fries? Or do you like regular fare in the middle of the day? If you are not enjoying such food options each week, you should join the students in the schools of Orangeburg District Five, according to Mrs. Irene H. Myers, assistant superintendent for instruction.

The food service activity in the district is one of the strongest support efforts for students. Recognizing that good nutrition is essential for a healthy body and a productive mind, breakfast and lunch are available for students in all schools.

"The breakfast program is the best thing that has happened in primary schools," Mrs. Irene McCollom, prin-

cipal at Mellichamp, noted.

Noting that many students who will not eat at home will eat breakfast at school, [she said] behavior has improved and student performance [has] increased since the initiation of breakfast.

Started in 1972 for preschool children and expanded in 1974 to include all students, the breakfast program has increased in participation each year. Records reveal an average of 2,252 students participated in the breakfast program each day during the past month of October, said Mrs. Myers.

Orangeburg-Wilkinson serves from 650 to 690 breakfasts each day. This is not only the highest participation in the district, it is the highest percentage of participation for any high



school in the state, it was pointed out.

Sounds great? It really is. The breakfast menu is varied each day, and each [menu] exceeds the basic requirements for an adequate meal. Breakfast servings consist of one-half cup of fruit, cereal products and milk, with protein in the form of sausage, cheese, ham patties or Canadian bacon at least three times a week.

"Breakfast participants are true southerners. The favorite breakfast in the district includes hot grits," Mrs. Lula Durant, coordinator of food services for the district, said.

A study reveals that participation in the breakfast program includes students from all areas of the attendance zones. With breakfast lines open as early as 7:15 in some buildings, students walk and ride to arrive in time to be served. "The program is certainly a boon to parents who can save on time and budget by student participation in breakfast at school," one administrator commented.

And what about lunch? Participation in the lunch program exceeds participation in the breakfast program with approximately 5,468 students eating lunch each day. Belleville Middle School boasts the largest percentage of lunch participation. With 1,025 students enrolled, an average of 950 eat lunch at school, said Mrs. Myers.

Menus vary day to day and week to week, but each school lunch is a Type A lunch which includes the food elements for good nutrition.

All of the options afforded by the quick food industries, the lunch time specials and home cooking are available to students at Orangeburg-Wilkinson.

Miss Ruby Betsill, manager of the food service at the high school, is sensitive to the likes and dislikes of the "pre and young" adults. Working with Mrs. Durant and organizing with her school food service staff, Miss Betsill has just initiated the final phase of the program with the addition of a "soup bar" for the winter months. Corn muffins accompany the

soup for a special delight. The soup line will give the fifth option for students and will be in addition to the regular lunch, the salad bar, the bag lunch and the quick line.

Declaring this school lunch program the most exciting food service she has observed, Miss Betsill is hard put to offer anything more. The choice of the type of lunch is up to the individual student on any given day, said Mrs. Myers.

Designed to permit students to exercise decisionmaking at least once each day, the philosophy extends to the regular lunch which is being served as a "buffet line." Always served as a Type A lunch with five food components, students may now select all items or a minimum of three. One of the side benefits derived from this buffet service has been the decrease in food wasted.

Student participation at Orangeburg-Wilkinson is greatest in the bag lunch service which is available in the cafeteria or in the canteen. From 1,000 to 1,100 bag lunches are served each day, and it is easy to understand why this is a favorite.

With contents varying each day, the bag lunch will contain a hot sandwich such as a cheeseburger, barbecue or hot dog, french fries or cob-bettes, fruit and cookies or cake, and milk. A passerby can observe this participation as students gather in small groups around the campus to enjoy a break for food and fellowship.

A favorite with faculty and many students at Orangeburg-Wilkinson has been the salad bar which is offered this year. Beginning with the crisp greens, participants can be their own chefs and build their own salads to suit individual tastes.

Pickles, relishes, a variety of vegetables, cheeses, meats and choices of dressing are featured each day, and the bowls are adequate for any appetite.

Menus and food offerings are not the only aspects of the food service subjected to scrutiny. All food facilities meet rigid requirements and

are inspected regularly by health agencies to assure standards of cleanliness. The gleam of stainless steel, and the plastic glove treatment give evidence of adherence to quality control in kitchens and facilities throughout the district, said Mrs. Myers.

Health regulations extend to the preparation of food. All members of the food service staff in the district receive continuing training in food care and preparation. Highly visible in all lunch facilities is the immaculate appearance of cafeteria personnel.

"We are always open to suggestions from parents, students, and faculty to improve the food service," Mrs. Durant said. "In fact, Orangeburg-Wilkinson now has a Youth Advisory Council which meets with us to give insight into the overall food program. This student input puts us in touch with the likes and dislikes of program participants and has been helpful in the development of the service."

Dr. Frank Meyers, principal at Marshall Elementary, says, "Meal time should be a pleasant time. I vary my lunch and eat with a different group of students each day. When the meal is finished, there is an excellent opportunity for conversation and interaction in a family type situation. Teachers have been asked to encourage conversation following the meal which is relaxing for students."

Every effort is being made to offer the very best food service possible to students.

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